

Margaret by rosekings

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Summary:

“Did you talk to Hopper about adopting it?” Mike asks quietly, running a hand up and down her back.

“He said no! He said - waste of - of money - cat will die any - anyways - I don’t want her to die, Mike!”

Margaret

Author's Note:

WHEN DID THEY CHANGE THE ELEVEN
CHARACTER TAG TO 'ELEVEN | JANE HOPPER' I'M
SO ANGRY ABOUT THIS

“El! *El!*”

Mike bangs on the door of Hopper’s cabin several more times. Finally someone opens it and Mike nearly falls on his face.

“Kid, do you not remember the knock?” Hopper says, looking extremely disgruntled.

“Sorry,” Mike answers, catching his breath. “I have some stuff from the library for El. She’s here, right?”

“Yeah, but, um...” Hopper hesitates and Mike immediately goes into full alert mode.

“What? What’s wrong? Is she okay? Is she hurt? What happened? Where’s El?” From inside the cabin Mike hears a sob and he’s pretty sure his heart skips a beat. “Eleven!”

He forces his way past Hopper and into the house, bursting through the door to Eleven’s bedroom. There she is, sitting on her bed with her wild curls and adorable overalls, face all red and puffy. In front of her is a newspaper that she’s staring intensely at, but at the sound of Mike crashing in like a wild boar, she looks up. Her cheeks are streaked with tears and her eyes are shimmering like there’s still more to come.

“Mike -” She tries to say something else but a huge sob comes out instead. Mike rushes over, dropping his bag to the floor as he climbs up next to her.

“What’s wrong, El? What’s going on? Have you been crying?”

“*Look.*” El gestures to the newspaper, sniffing. Mike hands her a box

of tissues from her nightstand and then wraps an arm around her, pulling the newspaper closer. It just looks like the normal paper from this morning, except there's water droplets all over it.

"I don't understand."

El wipes her nose and then points to an ad in the corner. At the top is a picture of a fluffy-looking cat, followed by some text.

"Cat for adoption," Mike reads aloud as El sniffs again. "Margaret is a 14-year-old Siamese cat looking for a friendly home. She is soft and sweet and stays quiet most of the time, but has, at the time of this ad, been diagnosed with mammary cancer. The vets estimate she has around twelve months left, and we are hoping someone will give Margaret a caring and loving family for her last year. If interested, please contact Hawkins adoption..."

Mike trails off, setting the paper down. If it was anyone but El bawling their eyes out next to him, he might've laughed. But be that as it may, the love of his fifteen-year-old life is in absolute shreds because of this cat, and he doesn't think humor is going to help.

"Do you - do you know what this ad means?" he asks her gently, handing her another tissue. She nods, eyes locked on the picture of the cat.

"Jim - Jim said it means - it means the cat is - is - is - *dying*." She spits out the last word with a wail and her eyes spill over again. Mike pushes the newspaper away and pulls her closer as she buries her face in his shoulder. "She doesn't have a home, Mike," El sobs into his shirt. "She's dying and I could - I could love her, and - and feed her, and -"

"Did you talk to Hopper about adopting it?" Mike asks quietly, running a hand up and down her back.

"He said no! He said - waste of - of money - cat will die any - anyways - *I don't want her to die, Mike!*"

Mike closes his eyes and takes a deep breath. "Well, I mean, everything comes to an end, El, you know that."

El leans back and stares at him, her woefully innocent brown eyes begging him to understand. "But I could - I could give her a - a home. For her last year. I could love her! Nobody loves her!"

Mike sighs and nods, giving her another handful of tissues. "I'll talk to Hopper, okay?" Really, the last thing he wants to do is go beg his girlfriend's adoptive father to get a dying cat, but El manages a weak smile and he knows he has to at least try. He climbs off the bed and leaves El's room, shutting the door behind him.

Hopper is sitting on the couch, watching Mike approach with raised eyebrows.

"You know why she's crying," Mike says.

"Yep."

"And you told her there was no *point?!'*"

"Kid, it's dying. It's only got a year. If she gets attached to that cat and then it dies, she'll be more upset than she is now."

Mike shakes his head. "She's locked up in this cabin by herself *all the time*. The least you can do is get her a pet. By the time it goes...she'll be in school, and she'll have friends to hang out with her instead."

Another sob comes out from behind El's door. Hopper stays resolute for just long enough to make Mike think he's failed, but finally his face cracks and he lets out what Mike swears is the world's heaviest sigh.

"Fine. *Fine*. We'll get her the cat. But I swear, Wheeler, if the thing shits in my bed, it's on you."

Two hours later, Mike and El sit on the floor, tickling and playing with the new ball of fur in front of them. Hopper had left some time ago for work, telling them to "make sure the damn thing stays inside and doesn't eat the carpet."

El is endlessly fascinated by Margaret. Every time she meows, El laughs like Mike's never heard before. He sits next to her,

occasionally giving the cat a poke when she wanders near him, but really he's entirely focused on El - focused on the way her eyes light up and how her smile looks like sunshine and how much he loves her. At some point she looks at him, the moon and stars shining in her eyes.

"Thank you, Mike. I love her."

Mike nods and smiles at her, squeezing her hand. "She loves you too. But where's the litter box?" He gets to his feet, giving the cat a glare. "If this thing takes its business anywhere inside the house, your dad is going to turn me into pet food."